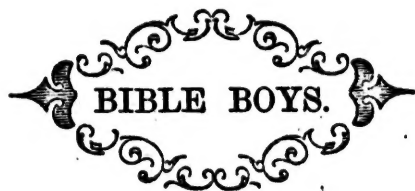


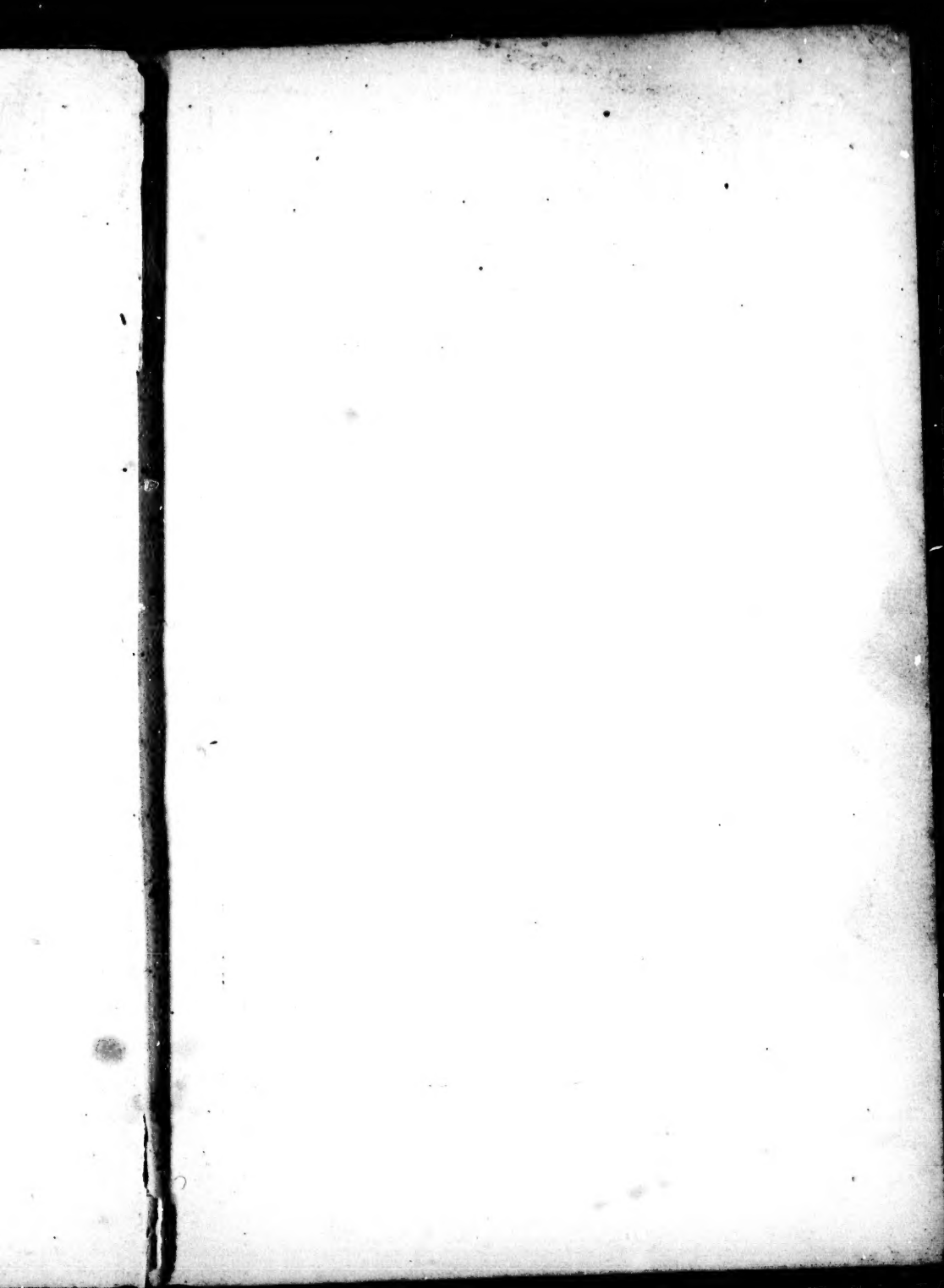
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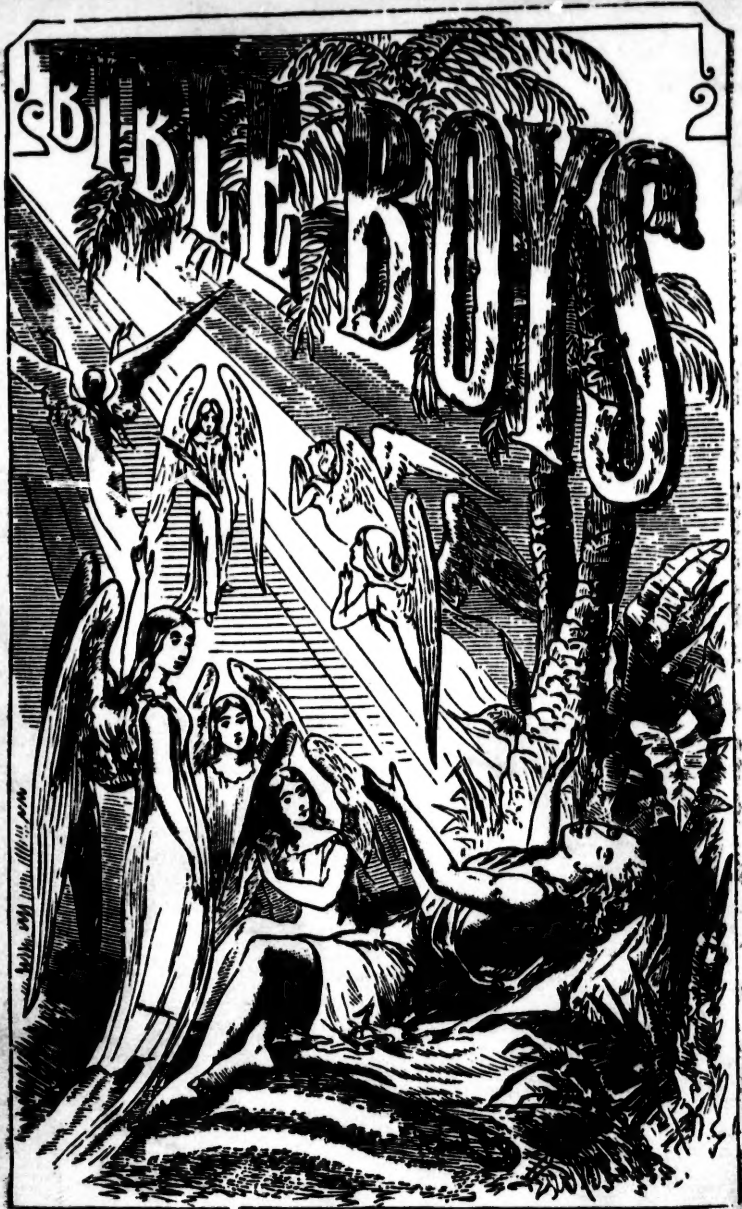


BIBLE BOYS.









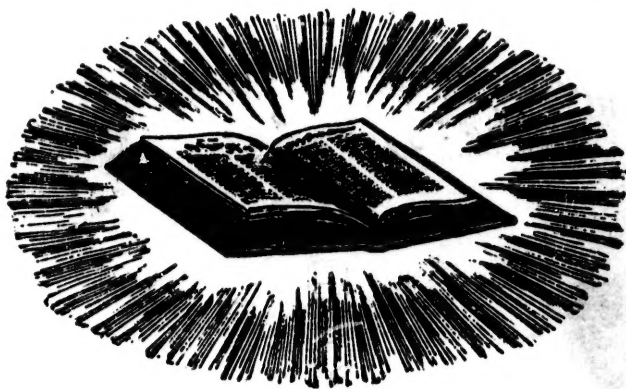
JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL.

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# READING BOOKS

BOOK FOR THE YOUNG

ILLUSTRATED  
WITH ENGRAVINGS.



HALIFAX:  
WILLIAM NICHOLSON AND SONS.  
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## INTRODUCTION.

**T**O whatever phase of human life we turn our view, we find that ample consideration is paid to it in the Bible, and we therefore become daily more confirmed in our opinion, that it is the only book which presents a just claim to universality. The man in the decline of life pressed down by the decrepitude of old age,—the man in the full bloom of bodily vigour,—the youth with his exuberant aspirations,—the child with its innocent forebodings of future growth and exertions,—each of them find in the Bible precepts of guidance for their conduct in life, true reasons for real rejoicing, and the best and pre-eminently available consolations in their troubles. The great book of inspiration, in this respect, fulfils the grand designs of its divine author, and has for every one a word, fitting their peculiar circumstances; just as the Almighty Creator, with all comprising love, embraces the universe and its contents. But as youth is the germ of manhood, and as good fruits cannot be expected to come forth at the proper time, without the plants being well attended to in the beginning of the season,—so especial care is taken in the Bible of impressing upon the minds of the adult the propriety and necessity of a good education of childhood and youth. But when reason begins to awaken in the minds of children, the duty of promoting their spiritual welfare devolves not only upon their adult guardians, but also upon themselves. For as soon as children are able to distinguish between right and wrong, they are an-

swerable to God for their own actions, and feeble though their exertions may be, still they are bound to do their duty in their own little sphere, and to strive as much as lies in their power, to live agreeably to the will of their heavenly father. Certainly they will, even more so than grown up people want assistance, as they try to climb the steep and thorny road to heaven. And this assistance is given to them in the word of God, in the Bible. There they will find pointed out to them the way they ought to go,—there they will find the proper rules which will guide them along the road, and prevent them from falling,—there they will find, like beacons shining in the darkness, the brightest examples of love to God and virtue, in order to stimulate them to an imitation of such examples, and to secure, by so doing, for themselves the same prize of victory which those shining lights of godliness have gained in by-gone ages. And as example has always been the most powerful means of promoting either good or evil, we propose to survey briefly the lives of the *boys* and *youths* mentioned in the Bible, as adapted to communicate sound doctrine and to teach us lessons for our own conduct.

In the life of every person there is illustrated the working of God's providence upon human affairs, and the peculiarities and consequences of human behaviour. This is strikingly displayed in the lives of individuals remarkable for their activity, as well as in the final fate that awaited them. Good actions are sooner or later, rewarded, crimes are punished, as the following pages will show.

## BIBLE BOYS.



### ISHMAEL.

**A** BRAHAM had a son called Ishmael, whose mother's name was Hagar. His history, as far as it is recorded in the Bible, shows us how graciously God provides even for the lowest of His people, for those that seem to be forsaken by every one. Ishmael's mother was only a servant, and, therefore, had to submit to the commands of Abraham's wife, her mistress. Ishmael himself, however, who was fourteen years of age, when his brother Isaac was born, behaved very rudely towards him. The Bible tells us, he mocked him, and we may safely suppose, that, by many petty vexations, he let his brother know that he was older and stronger than him. This was very wicked of Ishmael, for God wishes every one, but especially brothers and sisters, to live peaceably and lovingly



together. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—(Psalm cxxxiii. 1).

At last Sarah, Isaac's mother, became aware of Ishmael's misconduct, and she, consequently, asked Abraham, her husband, to send away both Ishmael and his mother Hagar. Abraham did not like to send them away into the wide world, but God himself told him to yield to the wishes of his wife. He, therefore, gave Hagar bread and a bottle of water, and told her to take her son and go with him to another country. He gave her that bottle of water, because, as she was an Egyptian, he supposed she would go back to her own country, and he knew that before reaching any inhabited place, she would have to pass the desert, where the ground is covered with a hot, burning sand, and where wells of fresh water are very rarely to be met with. Hagar, when she saw that her banishment was determined upon, took her son Ishmael by the hand, and, with a heavy heart, ventured upon her journey. Thus mother and son went on together through the dreary, desolate plains which form the confines of Palestine

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and Arabia, but very soon the bottle of water was emptied and they were "panting after the water brooks."—Psalm xlii. 1). Young Ishmael was very near exhausted, and his mother's heart was pierced by the pangs of death when she saw the sufferings of her beloved child. Ishmael, now, felt keenly the consequences of his unbrotherly conduct, for, if he had behaved towards Isaac with a true brotherly attachment, he might have been comfortable and happy in his father's house, instead of travelling in a desert, where he had no prospect of cooling his parched lips with a single drop of water.

Thus they walked on under the cloudless sky of those southern countries, and scorched by the rays of the burning mid-day sun; their sufferings increased to a dreadful degree, and neither far nor near the mother could discover any well of water, however anxiously she looked about for the refreshing fluid. At last the boy sank down on the ground, unable, any further, to bear the burning thirst which consumed his vital spirits. Hagar, when she saw this, burst out into loud lamentations, she raised up her voice and wept.

In that moment of indescribable grief, when both the mother and the son seemed unavoidably lost, an angel of the Lord called out to Hagar, and asked her what ailed her. At the same time he told her that God heard the voice of the lad and that he would not only save his life, but make him a great nation in time to come. God opened the eyes of Hagar, and when she looked up, she perceived a well of water. Refreshed by cold draughts of water they continued their journey, until they arrived at a spot where they could settle. Ishmael became an archer, and a mighty man, and he was the father of the numerous and powerful nations of Arabia. At the death of his father Abraham, as the sacred writings inform us, he, together with Isaac, buried him, so that we may safely conclude, that, when he arrived at a maturer age, he sought and accomplished a reconciliation with his brother Isaac.

We see, in this narrative, that a benevolent eye, the eye of God, watches over the troubles of mankind. Often, when all our prospects of a happy future appear darkened by the clouds of misery, a ray of Divine Mercy breaks through

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the overcast sky, opens our eyes to see the approaching help, and warms our hearts anew with an increased love for our heavenly Father. Through heavy trials He leads to the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and through these we shall arrive at the end of our pilgrimage, in the holy city, the new Jerusalem, "where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." —(Rev. xxi, 4).

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## I S A A C .

**A** BRAHAM, who, for his faith, was destined by God to be the father of His chosen people, received from the Almighty the command, to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. Without a murmur, without a question, Abraham made the necessary preparations and took his son Isaac to the place which the Lord had appointed for the sacrifice. Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his

son, he himself having the knife and fire in his hand : thus they walked on together. Isaac, who very likely had before this seen his father offer burnt offerings, was naturally surprised at not seeing any animal destined to be the victim. He, therefore, said to his father : " Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering ?" And Abraham said : " My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt offering," and again they went on together. How admirable is Isaac's ready obedience, and how worthy of being imitated by all children ! He put full confidence in his father, and, therefore, willingly carried the things that his father laid upon his shoulders,—and he had a strong faith in the Almighty power of God, and when his father said that God himself would provide a victim, he believed it, although he could not see how it was possible to get a lamb in a spot far from the pasture-grounds of his father's herds. When they had reached the appointed place, Abraham built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Isaac now saw that he himself was to be the lamb of

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ISAAC'S OBEDIENCE.

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the burnt-offering, yet no sound of complaint proceeded from his mouth. He was resigned to his fate, and obedient even unto death, knowing that to him who fears God, all things must be for the best. He was worthy of being an image of the Lamb of God, who, after having carried the cross on His own shoulders, breathed his last on the Mount of Calvary in obedience to His heavenly Father.

But Isaac's obedience was not left without immediate reward. When Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son, an angel of the Lord stopped him, told him to spare the life of Isaac, and Abraham sacrificed, instead of his son, a ram which he saw was caught in a thicket by its horns. Thus, Isaac was saved from death, and when he afterwards, in the course of nature, departed this life, he was rewarded with a crown of glory which God has prepared for all who love Him. And this reward has God promised to grant to all children, that, like Isaac, honour and obey their earthly parents and fear Him, namely, a long life and happiness here and hereafter.



## JACOB AND ESAU.

**I**SAAC and Rebekah had two sons: Jacob and Esau, of whom Esau, the eldest, was the father's favourite, while Jacob was more beloved by his mother, than his brother. For Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, and his father loved him, because he did eat of his venison; but Jacob was much plainer, dwelling in tents, consequently of a more homely character, and on that account endeared to the heart of his mother. Esau, one day, when coming home from the field-sports, was wearied and hungry. He saw that Jacob had some pottage and he desired him to let him have it. If Jacob had been animated by true brotherly love towards Esau, he would have cheerfully given him the pottage without asking anything for it in return. But he was selfish and would not give the pottage to his brother, unless the latter would agree to sell him his birthright. This birthright consisted of nothing else but the right of Esau, as the firstborn of Isaac, to claim a greater share of the inheritance than Jacob. Esau, in a careless way consented to his brother's request, and

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sold him his birthright. If we must acknowledge that Esau was very wrong in throwing away his birthright so carelessly, still more blameable is Jacob's behaviour. His covetousness misled him into taking advantage of his brother's weariness and hunger, so as to make him yield up a right which was very important in those times.

But this was not the only time when Jacob took an undue advantage over Esau. When Isaac grew very old, and felt that the Lord would soon take him away from this world, he asked Esau to go out with his quiver and his bow to the field, to procure some venison, and after having made him savoury meat, such as he loved, to come and receive his blessing. But Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to Esau, and, as she loved Jacob more than his brother, she was anxious to procure the promised blessing of Isaac to Jacob. She, therefore, ordered Jacob to fetch her from the flock two good kids of the goats, and make of them savoury meat, such as Isaac loved, in order that Jacob might take it to his father and offer it to him instead of the venison he expected from Esau. Isaac's

eyes were so dim that he could not see, he was, therefore, not able to distinguish between his two sons, except by their voices and the difference of their skins. For Esau's body was hairy; but Jacob's was smooth. And as Isaac would certainly be surprised at so early a return of Esau from hunting, Jacob thought that his father would still be suspicious and very likely touch him, in order to be sure that it was his eldest son Esau that stood before him. But his mother clothed him with garments belonging to Esau, and put the skins of the kids upon his hands and upon the smooth of his neck, so that Isaac, when feeling him, should think that he was touching the hairy skin of Esau. Thus provided with the means of deceit, Jacob went boldly up to his father, put the meat before him and asked for his blessing, pretending to be Esau. And Isaac, deceived by his touch, gave Jacob the blessing which he intended to give to Esau.

Soon after, Esau came to his father with the venison which he had prepared for him and asked for his blessing. Then Isaac knew that he had been deceived by Jacob, and was ex-

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tremely sorry for having given away his blessing. But Esau, in the grief of his heart, cried out aloud and begged of his father with many tears, to give him a blessing also. Isaac at last, gave Esau a blessing also, but the latter, after the first outburst of grief, conceived a deep hatred against his brother Jacob and was determined to kill him. But his mother Rebekah, hearing of this, gave a timely warning to Jacob and sent him away to her brother Laban. There Jacob had to remain for many years, far away from his home and his mother, that so dearly loved him, and many hardships he had to undergo, all of which he might have avoided, if he had obeyed God's commands and loved his brother, as it was his duty to do. And his mother, Rebekah, was punished also, for who could count the hours at day and at night of anguish and grief, when she had to tremble for the life of her beloved son, and when she might expect every moment to hear the dreadful news of one brother having slain the other.

After many years of toil, Jacob, at last, returned home, in great fear of his brother's anger and wrath. But Esau received Jacob very

friendly, and forgave him. This was very praiseworthy of Esau, but he, unfortunately, offended God and grieved his old parents by turning away his mind from the true God and befriending himself with idolators. Jacob, however, in the true spirit of repentance, strove to lead a life pleasing both to God and to his old father and mother. Let us, therefore, try, by all means, to shun deceit and lying, by which Jacob sinned in his youth, and let us rather imitate his behaviour in after life, which made him acceptable in the sight of God and a venerable patriarch in the sight of men.

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### JACOB AT BETHEL.

**W**HEN Jacob left his father's house he bent his way towards Padan-aram, where Laban lived, his mother's brother. When the sun was set he resolved to stay all night in a place which, at that time, was called Luz. He took several stones to serve him for a pillow, and soon forgot in a sound sleep the threats of his brother Esau and the troubles that awaited him

on his dangerous journey, and the length of time that he should be compelled to stay away from his father's house. But God, who knew the sincerity of Jacob's repentance for the grievous sins he had committed, sent him a dream that should comfort him in his present troubles, and stimulate his zeal to serve the Lord with all his power for the future. In this dream Jacob saw a ladder standing on the earth, but reaching with its top to heaven. The angels of the Lord were ascending and descending on it, and the Lord Himself deigned to appear to the inward sight of Jacob. Then God renewed to him the promise which he had made to Abraham and Isaac previously: he told him that he would give to him and his posterity the very land on which he was lying, that he would guide him and protect him in all places, wherever he should go, and that He would safely bring him back to the promised land. Jacob was, indeed, happy in this dream, he saw the heavens open in all their brightness, he saw God's angels smiling friendly upon him, and, above all, he heard the voice of the gracious Lord of heaven and earth comforting him and

blessing him, and promising him happiness and bliss. Now, although we may not have the privilege of so blessed a vision, yet we have the promise of the Lord to give us, when we leave this world, a habitation in His heavenly mansion, in the heavenly Jerusalem, provided that we obey His commands and walk in His ways. Jacob was promised the possession of the land of Canaan for himself and his posterity, but we are promised a dwelling-place in God's own house. Canaan was a land full of milk and honey, but the heavenly city of God surpasses in radiant beauty everything that exists and everything that can be thought of. "The light of the city is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God does lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof."—(Rev. xxi, 11, 23).

When Jacob awoke out of his sleep he said: "Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not; how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." He felt the blessedness of God's promise in his heart, but he was also struck

with reverence and a feeling of awe when he thought that it was the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth that had appeared to him in the vision of the passing night. Jacob changed the name of the place, and called it Bethel, which means, House of God. But he could not leave this sacred spot in the morning, without making a solemn vow, that at all times the Lord should be his God, and that, through the whole course of his life, he would serve him with all his power. Thus blessed by God Himself, and with good resolutions in his heart, he continued his journey. Let us, likewise, begin and continue the pilgrimage of our lives with the firm resolution to serve God, and God alone, and the blessing of the Almighty will not fail us. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." —(Psalm xxiii, 1, 4).





## JOSEPH and his BRETHREN.

**J**ACOB had twelve sons, but he loved Joseph more dearly than his other children, because he was the son of his old age. As a token of this favour, he had a coat of many colours made for him. The elder sons of Jacob, as the Bible informs us, often did what was wrong and wicked, and when Joseph witnessed any of their evil doings, he told his father about it, as it was his duty so to do. But the greater share of love which Jacob bestowed upon Joseph excited the envy of his elder brethren, and this envy increased to real hatred, when they perceived that "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Thus, instead of repenting their past wickedness, they added to their other sins the heinous one of hatred against their own brother.

This evil passion of the elder sons of Jacob even increased in intensity, when Joseph told them of two of his dreams, in which God foretold him his future greatness and superiority over his brothers. He once dreamed that he was binding sheaves of corn in the field with his brothers, and that their sheaves stood round

about, and made obedience to his sheaf. Another time he saw in a dream the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bow before him, which also clearly meant, that, at some future time, he should rule over all the members of his family. His father rebuked him and said: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" But he "observed the saying," that is, he kept these dreams in his memory. His brothers did not forget them either, but they remembered them only in a spirit of hatred and revenge.

Not long after, Joseph's brothers were, one day, feeding their father's flocks in the field, when Jacob anxious to get tidings of his sons and the flocks, sent Joseph after them to see what they were doing. When his brothers saw him afar off, even before he came near, they said one to another: "Behold, this dreamer cometh," and they conspired together to slay him. But Reuben, the eldest of them, shrunk with horror from the commission of so foul a murder, and, as he well knew that it would be a useless attempt to try to save him from all harm, he, at least, advised them not to shed

their brother's blood, but to cast him into a pit without water, and to leave him to his fate. For Reuben intended secretly to return, to take Joseph out of the pit and deliver him up to his father again. They acted according to his advice, and when Joseph drew near them, they seized him, stripped him of his coat of many colours, the present of his father, and cast him into a pit in which there was no water. They saw the anguish of his soul, when, in pitiful terms, he besought them to spare him, but the evil spirit hardened their hearts and filled them with thoughts of revenge and hatred.

After having cast Joseph into the pit, they sat quietly down to take their usual meal, when they perceived the approach of some Ishmaelites, with their camels laden with different kinds of merchandise. They were on their way to Egypt. Then Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, proposed to his brothers to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites as a slave, in order to avoid shedding his blood, and yet at the same time to get rid of him. His brothers immediately agreed to this proposal, took Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of

silver. They intended to escape the crime of slaying their own brother, but, if he had perished in consequence of their selling him, then, before the eyes of God, they would have been guilty of murder. And how could they tell what might happen to Joseph? Oh! they forgot that God would take them to account for every hour of suffering that they caused to Joseph by their wickedness, for every tear of anguish and sorrow that ran down the cheek of their brother, when he found himself treated like a slave and a criminal!

Joseph's brothers, when the Ishmaelites had disappeared with their newly-bought slave, took the coat of many colours which Joseph had worn, dipped it in the blood of a kid which they had killed, and brought it to their old father saying: "This have we found, know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." Jacob immediately recognised Joseph's coat, and believing he had been devoured by a wild beast, he gave way to lamentations and weeping, and refused to listen to the soothing words of his sons and daughters. The wicked perpetrators of the deed when they witnessed the intense

grief of their old father, dared not tell him to his comfort, that Joseph was yet alive, because they knew that punishment on the spot would follow the confession of their crime.

Meanwhile the Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph, proceeded on their journey to Egypt, and sold him there to a rich man, of the name of Potiphar. Joseph served his master humbly and faithfully, and whatever he took in hand, was, by the blessing of God, crowned with the happiest results; but the wicked wife of Potiphar preferred a false charge against him and he was cast into prison. Even there he soon won the favour of the man who was set over the prison, by the zeal and cheerfulness with which he performed every service entrusted to him. The keeper of the prison soon gave Joseph a proof of his confidence by committing all the other prisoners to his care. Thus, however great his misfortune, and in whatever position he found himself, he always remembered God and His commandments, and discharged faithfully his duty towards those persons who were set over him as his masters.

Soon after Joseph had had the charge of the

whole prison conferred upon him by the keeper, two house-officials of the king were brought in prisoners, namely, the butler and the baker of Pharaoh. Joseph had to attend and serve them whilst they were in prison, and in this way he became acquainted with their character and history. One morning, when Joseph entered their room, he was struck with the expression of sadness he discovered in their countenances. To his question as to the cause of their sorrow, they told him that they were frightened by the dreams they had on the preceding night, and that there was no interpreter who could tell them the meaning of their dreams. Joseph told them that the interpretation was a gift of God, but asked them at the same time to tell him what they had dreamed about. Then the butler told him, that in his vision he saw a vine with three branches budding, and blossoming, and bringing forth ripe grapes; the cup of Pharaoh, the king, was in his hand, and he pressed the grapes into Pharaoh's cup and put it into his hand. Joseph told him that the three branches meant three days, and that after three days the king would release him from his

imprisonment and receive him again into his former favour. To this interpretation Joseph added, in touching words, a request, that the butler, when reinstated into his former office, might remember him who, by the grace of the Lord, had foretold him his good fortune, and mention him to Pharaoh, so that he also might be liberated. "For indeed," Joseph said, "I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." After this the baker told Joseph that in his dream he had three baskets upon his head; in the uppermost of them was all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, and the birds came and did eat them out of the basket. Joseph told him that the three baskets meant also three days, and that after three days the king would have him hanged, and the birds would eat his flesh from off him. And as Joseph, by the power of the Almighty God, had interpreted their dreams, so it happened to them three days after. The king restored the butler to his former favour and had the baker hanged. But the butler forgot in his prosperity the poor Hebrew pris-

oner, who had served him so cheerfully in prison, and comforted and raised his spirits by the truthful interpretation of his dream. Joseph, therefore, remained in prison, and saw no prospect before him of getting his liberty again.

But God does not for ever visit His saints with sufferings: after many days of grief and sorrow He comforts and elevates those who humbly bow to His divine decrees, and, with pious resignation, bear the burden that God has laid upon their shoulders. Thus it happened to Joseph, for, after having pined in prison for some years, the hour of deliverance at last drew nigh. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had two wonderful dreams. In his first dream he saw seven fat kine eaten up by seven thin and lean ones; in the second he perceived seven good fine ears of corn devoured by seven bad and thin ears. The king awoke from his dreams greatly troubled in his mind, and was anxious to hear their interpretation. But although all the wise men and magicians of Egypt were called together, there was none among them that could tell the king the meaning of his dreams, because the grace of God was not in




them, nor were they enlightened by His holy spirit. Then, at last, the butler remembered the poor Hebrew prisoner who had so truthfully interpreted his own dream and that of the baker, and he advised the king to send for him. Joseph, who by the inspiration of Almighty God, possessed the gift of knowing the right interpretation of dreams, told Pharaoh that the seven fat kine and the seven good ears meant seven years of fruitfulness and plenty for the land of Egypt; and that the seven lean kine and the seven thin ears pointed to seven years of famine that would follow the seven fruitful years, and would consume every store that might have been laid up during the time of abundance and plenty. But that the king had two dreams, both meaning the same thing, showed that the events predicted by them would occur very soon. Joseph, therefore, advised the king to look out for a man endowed with prudence and wisdom, that should lay up corn during the seven years of plenty, in order to be able to feed the people when the time of famine should arrive. Pharaoh choose Joseph himself for this important office, and made him ruler over the whole land of

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JOSEPH INTERPRETING THE KING'S DREAM.



Egypt. Thus Joseph was delivered from a state of confinement and humiliation, and elevated to the highest dignity after the king. God rewarded him, in this way, for the many years of suffering and sorrow, by raising him high above any position he could have attained, if he had always stayed in his father's house. And Joseph did not disappoint the expectations of the king and the people, but, by his wise measures and the provident care he exercised, when the years of famine arrived the Egyptians did not die from want, but had an abundant supply of corn for the whole nation.

Meanwhile, Jacob lived with his family in the land of Canaan, sorrowing and mourning over the loss of his beloved son Joseph. His sons were unsuspected, but we may safely suppose that they were often tormented by the gnawing remorse of conscience; for every lamentation that burst from the lips of their old father, nay, every look of grief from his tearful eyes, must have entered their guilty hearts like a dagger. But cares for their daily bread soon were added to the sorrows of Jacob's family, for a great dearth of corn made itself

felt in Canaan, and there had been no Joseph there to provide for the future, by carefully economising present abundance. When, however, it began to be known that there was plenty of food in Egypt, Jacob sent his sons there to buy corn. Twice they made the journey to Egypt, and each time, when they made their appearance before Joseph, they humbly bowed before the mighty ruler of the land, in whom they did not recognise that brother, whom, as a mere child, they had once sold to the Ishmaelite merchants. Thus the dreams of Joseph in his early youth were fulfilled, when he saw the sheaves of his brothers make obedience to his sheaf. Joseph felt the strongest emotions on beholding his brothers, and at last, he made himself known to them, showing them at the same time, how God, in His mercy, had ordained that their wicked deed when selling him, should end in the happiest results both for themselves and their ill-treated brother. As he perceived that they were sincerely repentant, he kindly forgave them, and, instead of thinking of revenge, he did everything to make them comfortable and happy, thus, according to the

words of the apostle Paul, "heaping coals of fire on their heads."—(Rom. xii, 20). He sent them with rich presents back to their old father Jacob, in order to fetch him to Egypt. Jacob was overjoyed when hearing that his son Joseph was alive, prosperous, and happy, and willingly went to Egypt and lived there happily to the end of his days.

Let us, then, profit by the lessons conveyed in this narrative. While we are shocked at contemplating the wickedness of Joseph's brothers, let us also admire the wonderful ways of God's providence. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—(Rom. xi, 33). And let us, at the same time, imitate the shining virtues of Joseph, his perseverance in doing what was right, his resignation and patience in suffering, his firm trust in God's providence, and his readiness in forgiving those who had done evil to him.



## MOSES.

**T**HE descendants of the family of Jacob increased so much in Egypt, that the king and the people were afraid, lest the Israelites should become powerful enough, at last, to conquer the Egyptians and take possession of the land. Pharaoh, the king at that time, knew nothing of Joseph, and the wisdom and foresight with which he had preserved the lives of the people of Egypt; gratitude, was, therefore, no check upon his cruel disposition, and as a means of preventing the increase of the despised people of the Hebrews, and of keeping them in perpetual submission, he gave out the command, and that their new-born children of the male sex should be thrown into the river and drowned. Many children of the Israelites were killed, accordingly, and in their dwellings nothing was heard but weepings, and lamentations, and fervent prayers to God, their heavenly Father, for deliverance from their intolerable sufferings. And God looked down from heaven upon His oppressed people, and resolved to raise one out of their midst, who,

as an instrument of His almighty power should deliver the children of Israel from the cruel treatment under which they were writhing.

A woman of the family of Levi managed to conceal her child for a time, and when, after three months had passed away, she could no longer hide him, she put the child into a basket, and laid this among the reeds, by the side of the river. Not long after, the daughter of the king of Egypt came to the river-side for the purpose of taking a bath, and perceived the basket among the reeds. It was brought to her, and when she saw that it contained a little babe, the danger and helplessness of the little one moved her compassion, and she determined upon saving its life. The sister of the child had, meanwhile, been watching near the river all that happened, and when she saw that Pharaoh's daughter showed signs of compassion, she offered to fetch a nurse for the baby. This offer was accepted, and the king's daughter entrusted her with the care of the child. Afterwards, the daughter of Pharaoh took him to her own house, adopting him as her own son, and had him instructed by the wisest teachers that



could be found in Egypt. His name she called Moses, which in the Hebrew language means, drawn out of the water.

Thus God saved Moses when he was but a babe, from a cruel death, because he had destined him to be a great prophet among His people. And when God wills a thing, it is done, and all the powers of earth and hell cannot prevail against Him. But the way in which He executes His providential designs, are very often wonderful and unintelligible to the weak human understanding. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"—(Rom. xi, 33.) How wonderful was it that the very daughter of the cruel king of Egypt was chosen by His wise and just providence to save that Israelitish child, who afterwards, by the command and will of Almighty God, was to punish the king and the people of Egypt by so many frightful plagues, and, finally, to deliver His oppressed people out of their bondage and servitude. Let us, therefore, adore the wisdom of God's providence, and neither despair in

adversity, nor wantonly boast in prosperity,—for we can do nothing by ourselves, it is an Almighty hand that holds the sceptre over the fate of mankind.

Moses still remembered, amidst all the splendour and riches by which he was surrounded as the adopted son of the king's daughter, from whence he sprung, and his heart beat for his kindred and his people. One day he saw an Egyptian beat an Israelite, and, moved by compassion for his suffering brother, he slew the Egyptian. The next day he saw two Israelites fighting against each other, and when he tried to interfere in behalf of him that was in the right, the other defiantly told him, that he was no prince or judge over them, and that he should not kill him, as he did the Egyptian. Moses, then saw that his deed on the preceding day was known, and he well knew, that if Pharaoh should hear of it, it would draw down upon him the vengeance of the king. Indeed, a very short time after, he had to leave the country, because Pharaoh, who had been informed of what Moses had done, sought to slay him. But he rather submitted to exile and to

the loss of all prospect of riches and splendour, than that he should refuse assistance to one of his brothers, one of his own oppressed people, when he most wanted it.

But Moses was not only a true and faithful friend of the people he belonged to by birth, he was also a steadfast believer in the true and living God. The king, in whose palace he was educated, and his people, were worshippers of idols, of beasts, &c., and certainly great temptations were held out to Moses to leave the worship of the true God, and join the Egyptians in their abominations. The king's own daughter had adopted him as her son, and no dignity in the kingdom, no honour was too high for him, if he would only conform to the customs and religion of the people of the land. But Moses knew that honours, riches, and all the splendour and magnificence of this world is like dust, that everything on earth must fade away, but that the soul of man is immortal, and will have to answer before God for all things committed in the flesh; he, therefore, preferred the service of the true and living God to all the treacherous allurements of this world.

From his exile Moses was recalled by God Himself, and commanded to return to Egypt and lead the children of Israel to the promised land of Canaan. But Pharaoh would not let the people go, and Moses, therefore, by the power which God gave him, smote the Egyptians with many plagues. At last all the first-born of Egypt were slain by the angel of the Lord, and then the king consented to let the children of Israel go on their journey. Soon after, however, he was sorry for having given his consent, and he pursued them with a mighty host of soldiers and chariots. The Israelites were passing through the Red Sea, when they saw the army of the Egyptians pursuing them. The king, stimulated by his hatred and thirst for vengeance, hastened after them, but when the Israelites had safely arrived on the opposite shore, the waters of the sea returned to their former bed, and Pharaoh with his mighty host were drowned. The Israelites had to wander through the desert for forty years, because, by their perverseness and obstinacy, they had shown themselves unworthy of possessing the promised land. But their children, by the help

of God, entered and at length conquered it.

Moses, through all these forty years of wandering, continued to be the true friend and faithful leader of his people, and remained steadfast in his faith and hope in the Lord of hosts. At Mount Sinai he was deemed worthy of receiving the tables of the law from God Himself, and became, thereby, the prophet of the old covenant, as our Saviour is the prophet of the new. Moses himself, pointed to our Redeemer, when, shortly before his death, he told the Israelites: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken."—(Deut. xviii, 15). Moses himself was not allowed to enter Canaan, but from the top of a mountain he beheld the good land beyond Jordan and the mountains of Lebanon. He died in the land of Moab, and God Himself buried him, so that "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."—(Deut. xxxiv, 6—10).

## SAMUEL.

A PIOUS woman, of the name of Hannah, whom God had not blessed with any children, fervently prayed to God to bestow that blessing upon her. God answered her prayers, and she had a son, whose name she called Samuel, that is: God heareth. She, together with her husband, who was a pious and upright man, took great care to bring the child up in the fear of the Lord. Besides other means of instilling into his mind the right principles of a pious life, she knew of none better than to give him up to the guidance of a faithful servant of the Lord. And as she considered the child as a present of the Lord, and wanted him to serve God all his life-time as one of His appointed ministers, she brought him, when he was yet very young, to the high-priest Eli, that he might be properly instructed in his duties. In the house of Eli Samuel heard and learned to understand the law of God, he often listened to the wise admonitions of good men, but he witnessed also the bad behaviour and the wicked deeds of the sons of Eli. He was

in the same position as nearly all children are, even at this present time; they have good and bad examples set before them, they have many opportunities of listening to the counsels of godly persons, and, unfortunately, some time or other, they hear also the speeches of bad people, and words of bad advice,—they have to choose for themselves, on which side they will stand, whether they will follow God and His commandments, or yield to the evil spirit and his temptations. Samuel choose the better part and walked in the ways of the Lord. And those blessings which always attend a faithful discharge of duty and a sincere desire of pleasing our heavenly Father, were not wanting to Samuel. “He ministered before the Lord, being a child;” we therefore, see that even a child may minister before the Lord, it may at least try to do His will by obeying good parents and teachers. “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.” What a precious reward of early piety is held out and offered in these words to all children. They naturally are pleased when they are liked by all their friends and

acquaintances, and they are also aware, that it is the highest blessing for a human being to be in favour with the Lord. And both these desirable results they may secure for themselves, by doing what Samuel did, viz., obeying their parents on earth, and humbly serving God with zeal and devotion.

God had, at many times, deigned to make His divine will known to human beings by dreams and visions, but at that time, as the Bible tells us, there was no open vision. There was so much wickedness in the house of Eli, executed and encouraged by his two sons, that the Lord withdrew his grace and favour from that house, and informed them no longer of his intentions and will with regard to the future. But when Samuel became an inmate of the high priest's house, a child pure and innocent, and when he continued to walk in the ways of the Lord, notwithstanding the bad example of the sons of Eli, the Lord deigned to honour him with His highest favour and to reveal to him the events of the future.

One night, when Samuel lay asleep in the house, where the ark of God was. the Lord



called him by name. Samuel, however, to whom, never before that night, the word of the Lord had been revealed in a similar way, thought, that Eli, the high priest, was calling him. He, therefore, ran to Eli, to inquire what he wanted. Eli told him to lie down again, since he had not called. Samuel did so, but a second time he heard a voice calling his name. Again he hastened to Eli, and again he was told that it was not the high-priest who wanted him. When, however, this was repeated the third time, Eli advised him, if he should hear the same voice again, to answer: "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth," for Eli believed that it was the Lord Himself who wanted to reveal something to him. Samuel acted according to the advice of Eli, and then God told him that He was about to execute the judgment which He had by one of His prophets pronounced upon Eli and his house, on Eli, for not restraining his sons, and on his sons for their wickedness and wanton behaviour. The next morning Eli was anxious to know what the Lord had revealed to Samuel, and he therefore, asked him to tell him every word the Lord had


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spoken, and to conceal nothing from him. Samuel did not like to tell Eli, because he was grieved to think that his kind master should be punished by God for the culpable weakness he exhibited towards his wicked sons. But as Eli pressed him very much, he told him every word and hid nothing from him. And Eli, who had no fault but his weakness, answered with resignation: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." Thus the Almighty God showered His blessings upon Samuel, even when he was only a child, and the Bible says again, that "he grew and the Lord was with him, and all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." And from this time the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, the see of the high-priest, and revealed Himself to Samuel, so that he always knew the will of God, and was able to communicate it to the people. For in those days God wanted the people to listen to, and obey the words of His high-priest and of those prophets whom He was pleased, from time to time, to raise among His chosen ones; in our own days He wants us to act according

to the teaching of His holy word, as it is deposited in the Bible.

Shortly after the revelation of God to Samuel was fulfilled, for the two sons of Eli were, on one day, slain in the battle-field, and Eli himself died, when he heard the dreadful news, by falling backwards from his seat and breaking his neck.

After the death of Eli, Samuel became the high-priest and judge of the people of Israel, and he ruled over them with justice and wisdom, in the fear of the Lord and in obedience to His laws. He lived to a great age, and died at last in the Lord, full of grace. He served his God faithfully from his earliest childhood, and God rewarded him for his piety, by pouring upon him His choicest blessings, both in this world and in the world to come; for "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—(Rev. xiv, 13).





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## DAVID.

WHEN Saul, the first king of Israel, was rejected by the Lord for his disobedience, David was chosen by God to succeed him in the government of His people. He was the son of Jesse, a man of Bethlehem, and the youngest of the family. The Bible tells us that "he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." But it was not for this reason that David was chosen by God to be king of His chosen people; he was deemed worthy of that dignity on account of his sincere piety, and his firm, though humble confidence in the providence of God. He was employed in feeding his father's sheep, and this peaceful occupation presented to him every opportunity of admiring the greatness of God in the beauties of nature. But he felt the greatest delight in singing the praises of the Lord to the sounds of his harp. Thanks for received benefits,—admiration for God's wisdom and providence,—sorrow and grief at the sinfulness of human nature,—the cries of a broken heart to the Lord for pardon and peace,—all the pious feel-

ings of his heart he poured forth in those beautiful poems, which, under the name of David's psalms, have through all centuries been a precious healing balm to the wounded hearts of thousands of sinners, and a great consolation to the unfortunate and afflicted part of mankind.

Soon after David had been anointed king, God granted him an opportunity of distinguishing himself before the eyes of the people over which he was to rule. The Philistines, the old and obstinate enemies of the people of Israel, invaded the country and pitched their tents opposite to the camp of the Israelites. One of their number, Goliath by name, who was a giant in stature and strength, challenged the men of Israel to single combat, and, with wanton insolence, defied both the army and the God of the chosen people. The three eldest brothers of David served in the king's army, and David himself, who was considered too young to join the warriors of Israel, was sent by his father to the camp, to bring provisions to his elder brothers, and to inquire for their welfare. When David arrived at the camp, he witnessed the insolence and defiance of Goliath,

and a burning zeal for the honour of God and his country took possession of his soul, when he heard the wicked blasphemies of the champion of the Philistines. He immediately resolved upon accepting the giant's challenge, fully trusting in the power of the Lord, who can provide even the weakest with sufficient strength. His eldest brother thought the desire of David for fighting the insolent Philistine was nothing but boyish forwardness and presumption, and therefore rebuked him, but David could not be prevailed upon to desist from the enterprise. King Saul, likewise, when he was informed of David's desire for accepting the challenge of the champion of the Philistines, thought him by far too young and not at all strong enough to fight successfully against so renowned and mighty a warrior as Goliath was. David, however, told the king, that, when feeding his father's flocks, he once snatched a lamb out of a lion's mouth and killed the lion, and that at another time he slew a bear. Saul, at last, gave his consent to the combat with the Philistine and offered David his own armour. But not being used to armour, the young shepherd-



boy felt it more as a hindrance than a help, and went against the Philistine without either shield or helmet, or sword, his only weapons being five smooth stones out of the brook which he put in his bag, and a sling which he held in his hand.

Goliath, trusting in the strength of his gigantic limbs, and the excellence of his weapons, laughed David to scorn, when he approached him, and threatened to make his body a prey to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. But David answered that he came there in the name of the Lord of hosts, and that God would smite both Goliath and the Philistines on that day, so that their carcasses should become the food of the fowls of the air and of the beasts of the field. He then took a stone out of his bag, flung it at Goliath, and hit him on his forehead so severely that the giant fell senseless to the ground. David ran quickly up to him, and with Goliath's sword he cut off his head. The Philistines, when they saw that their champion was slain, were seized with a sudden panic, and, leaving their tents behind them, ran away in all directions. A

great number of them were killed by pursuing Israelites, and thus, by the intrepidity and bravery of young David, the army of the chosen people gained a signal victory over their enemies. "Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies." —(Psalm cviii, 13). Saul, the king, wishing to keep so brave a youth about his person, would not allow him to return to his father, but took him to his own house. And when Saul returned from the battle, with David among his followers, the women of all the cities of Israel came out to meet them, playing and singing: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This excited in the breast of Saul envy and hatred against David, and ever from that day he considered the young hero as his deadly enemy and persecuted him as such.

But whilst Saul, forsaken by the grace of God and haunted by the evil spirit, sought David's life, Jonathan, his son, proved a true and faithful friend of the persecuted but innocent David. For, after the slaughter of the Philistines, "the soul of Jonathan was knit

with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Several times, Saul tried to kill David, by casting his javelin at him, but by the assistance of God, whom he truly served, David always escaped the danger that threatened him. When, however, he saw that Saul was bent upon taking his life, he kept away from the palace of the king. Still he was in danger of his life, because the power of kings reaches far, and, therefore he gladly accepted the good services of his friend Jonathan, who acquainted him whether the danger was near or not.

The feast of the new moon was approaching, when the principal officers of the king were expected to come and join him at meal-time. David knew this very well, but was afraid of showing himself before Saul, because he knew that when the king was seized with the evil spirit he would try to kill him. But he met Jonathan, his friend, before the feast came on, and with him he agreed as to the course he should take. The two friends met in a field, and sad and sorrowful was their interview, the one threatened by instant death, and the other the

son of the very man that sought his friend's life. They renewed their covenant of friendship before the Lord, and David began, in bitter sorrow, to complain of Saul's hatred and persecutions, for, as the Bible powerfully expresses it, "there was but a step between him and death." He asked of his friend to kill him himself, if he thought there was any evil in him, or else, according to the sacred friendship by which their souls were joined together, to let him know whether his father entertained any wicked designs against him, or not. There was indeed true friendship between them, based upon a mutual liking to each other, and a firm adherence to the principles of virtue and godliness: they took the Lord as witness of their covenant, and He looked upon their attachment with a gracious eye. Our friendships with other persons ought to be as pure and godly, as that of David and Jonathan; for if they cannot bear the searching eye of the Almighty, we may be sure that His blessing will be wanting, and that they will result in nothing but evil.

Jonathan solemnly promised his friend to meet him again after three days, and to inform

him of any danger threatening him from the king. They agreed that Jonathan should bring a lad with him, shoot an arrow, and then send the lad after it to fetch it. If he then should say to the lad: the arrow is on this side of thee, it was to be a token to David, that he might come forth from his concealment in safety; but if he should say: the arrow is behind thee, it was to inform David, that he was in danger, and must prepare himself for immediate flight. Accordingly, Jonathan sounded his father, the king, as to his intentions with regard to David. But when the festival of the new moon arrived, and Saul found David's seat at the table empty for two succeeding days, he inquired for the cause of his absence. Jonathan tried to excuse his friend, but the king not only avowed his intention of killing David, but grew extremely angry with his son for taking his friend's part, and even threw a javelin at him. Then Jonathan arose from the table with a sorrowful heart, and on the following day he proceeded, accompanied by a lad, to the spot near which David kept himself concealed. He shot an arrow, told the lad to run

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and to fetch it, and exclaimed then, in a loud voice, so that David could hear him: "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" David who knew, by this token, that the king sought his life, came forward, as soon as the lad had been sent away, and the two friends embraced and burst into tears at the thought of a separation under such mournful circumstances. But there was no time to be lost in lamentations; Jonathan, therefore, reminding David of the covenant that existed between themselves and their posterity in the name of the Lord, told him to go in peace. With a heavy heart, but resigned to the will of the Lord, David at last arose, and fled from the vengeance and hatred of king Saul, but Jonathan returned to the city.

Many were the dangers and hardships that David had to undergo during all the time that Saul persecuted him; but by the merciful providence of the Lord, he was saved from all perils, for God commands His angels to guide and protect the virtuous on their thorny path through life. David became one of the greatest heroes that the world has ever seen, and the most powerful and successful of all the kings

that ruled over the chosen people of God. The prominent features of his character were sincere piety, a firm trust in God, and, consequently, fearlessness in danger of every kind. Let us imitate these virtues, in order to please God, and to advance our own welfare, for however great the number of our enemies may be, and whatever shape our troubles may take, our shield and rock is the Lord on this day, as on the day when David slew Goliath. It is true that David fell into grievous sins, for his nature was as sinful as ours, but he never ceased to repent them, to weep over them and to ask God's pardon; let us, therefore, when we have become, like David, in sin, equal him also by the sincerity and depth of our repentance, and try to deserve the same praise that the Holy Scriptures bestow on him, when they call him "a man after God's own heart."

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### ABSALOM.

**A**BSALOM was one of the sons of king David. He was possessed of great bodily beauty, but unfortunately his heart was very wicked.

He was very ambitious, and although his position as a son of the king was a very high one, yet he was discontented ; besides this he was of a very revengeful disposition. One of his brothers did him a grievous injury, but, instead of forgiving him for God's sake, and trying to bring him back to the path of virtue,—he conceived the deepest hatred against his brother. He, therefore, simulated indifference, but at a great festival which he gave to all the sons of the king, he had his brother slain by his servants. To escape the punishment for the commission of this atrocious crime, he fled to another country, but after some time, the king, his father, kindly forgave him and received him into his favour again. Shortly afterwards, however, he raised a rebellion against his own father, who had treated him so kindly and mercifully, and compelled him to leave Jerusalem, and to flee, for his life, into the wilderness.

Absalom's father, however, was not without friends, and they soon roused themselves and rallied round their beloved king. He soon was able to muster an army of men, all of whom burned with the desire of putting their lives in



jeopardy, in order to protect the kind father against the unnatural son. Absalom, meanwhile, had collected his forces and was marching against his father's army. A bloody battle ensued between the misguided followers of Absalom and the faithful warriors of the king, but God, the ruler of battles, "who executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed," (Psalm ciii, 6), was on the side of the afflicted father, and Absalom's followers were utterly routed. Twenty thousand of them were slain and Absalom himself took to flight, he was riding on a mule, and when he tried to pass under a great oak, his long hair was caught in the branches of the tree, the mule ran away from under him, and thus Absalom hung suspended on the oak between heaven and earth. People who passed him, and saw his perilous position, soon acquainted the captain of David's army of what had happened, and this man caused Absalom to be killed and to be thrown into a pit, after which they heaped a great number of stones upon his body. His father, when he heard of the miserable end of his son, burst out into loud lamentations, for,

in spite of all his crimes, he loved his son, and would have gladly spared his life. He exclaimed again and again, with bitter grief: "Oh Absalom, my son! Oh, my son Absalom!" But at last the very friends of the king began to grumble at his mourning only over him who had been the cause of the slaughter of so many men better than him. Then the king suppressed his grief, and showed a cheerful countenance to the people that were rejoicing at the welcome tidings of the crushing of so dangerous a rebellion.

The fearful end of wicked Absalom ought to be a warning to all Christian children. They know, or ought to know, the commandment of God, to honour their parents as long as they live. God has promised a long life and happiness to all children that faithfully perform their duties toward their parents; but, on the other hand, he threatens with an awful curse all those who are cruel, or even undutiful to their fathers or mothers. God even commanded the Israelites to put to death any son that should curse his father or mother. "And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to

death.—(Ex. xxi, 17). And again : “ If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them : .....all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die : so shalt thou put evil away from among you ; and all Israel shall hear and fear.”—(Deut. xxi, 18—21). But Absalom sinned even more grievously against his father. After having murdered his brother, and being kindly forgiven by his father, his heart and voice ought to have been uplifted in thanks and praises to God, and in earnest prayers for a new heart. But Absalom never sincerely repented ; he certainly dreaded the consequences of his sin, the punishment that his father might inflict upon him, but he felt no sorrow in his heart for having committed a heinous crime. The whisperings of the evil spirit gained the ascendancy in his heart and soul, and with a fearful quickness he went on in the road to perdition. He continued as he had begun, in the way of ingratitude, disobedience, hypocrisy, and murder ; he despised the commandments

and threatenings of the Lord, until the stern judgment of the righteous God overtook him, and at once deprived him of the life of his body and the salvation of his soul.

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## JOASH.

**A**FTER the death of Ahaziah, king of Judah, his mother Athaliah, who was cruel and wicked in her heart, commanded that all "the seed royal of the house of Judah" should be destroyed. All the male members of the royal family were, accordingly, cruelly murdered, except Ahaziah's youngest son, Joash, who at that time was only a babe. His life was saved by his aunt Jehoshabeath, the wife of the priest Jehoiada, who hid him for six years in the house of God.

During all this time the wicked Athaliah reigned as queen over the kingdom of Judah, and encouraged the people to worship idols and to indulge in every vice that displeased God. But when little Joash was seven years old,

Jehoiada, the priest, consulted the captains, the Levites, and many of the people, as to the best means of punishing Athaliah for the crimes she had committed, taking away the kingdom from her, and giving the crown of Judah to Joash to whom it rightly belonged. For Joash was of the house of David, and the descendants of that house God had appointed to be kings, and promised His assistance; the Lord "showeth mercy to His anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore."—(Psalm xviii. 50).

When the right moment had arrived, Jehoiada, the captains, Levites, and all the people that were assembled in the house of the Lord, brought Joash out of his place of concealment, put the royal crown on his head, and exclaimed: "God save the King!" Wicked Athaliah who, attracted by the shouting, had come to the house of the Lord, to see what was the matter, was put to death for the many crimes and murders she had committed. But the people who had witnessed the crowning of Joash, together with the young king, and the captains and Levites made a covenant with the Lord, the King of heaven and earth, and promised

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ABSALOM'S DEATH.

faithfully to obey His laws and commandments for the future.

And great cause indeed had the young king, both to make and keep his promise, and to remember the goodness of the Lord, for when his father was dead and his wicked grandmother "destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah," when Joash himself was but a helpless child, the Lord held His protecting hand over him, and took care of him, according to the word of the Scriptures: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."—(Psalm xxvii. 10).


Joash was only seven years old when he was proclaimed king, but Jehoiada, his benefactor and friend, who, under God's providence had protected his life so far, took care of his childhood and youth, brought him up in the fear of God, and arranged for him the affairs of the kingdom, especially as far as the worship of the true God was concerned. Accordingly the temple of Baal, the idol, and all his altars and images were destroyed, and the services and offerings in the house of the Lord were again carried on in the manner ordained by David.



Thus Jehoiada, the priest, did "good in Israel, both toward God, and toward His house." Under the instruction of this pious servant of the Lord, and stimulated by his example to follow in the path of virtue, Joash grew up and promised to become one of the best kings of Judah. When he had attained the proper age, to rule himself as king over the chosen people of God, he exhibited a very praiseworthy zeal in repairing the house of the Lord. Collections were made throughout the land, workmen were engaged, and the house of God "was set in his state and strengthened," and filled with vessels of gold and silver. All this was "right in the sight of the Lord," and Joash continued to set his people an example of virtue and godliness, as long as Jehoiada, his benefactor, lived.

After the death of this pious priest, however, Joash left the house of the Lord God of his fathers and served groves and idols, and although God sent prophets that admonished him to repent and return from his wicked ways to the worship of the Almighty, yet he hardened his heart and refused to listen to the wise advice of those godly men. But he even went farther

in his wickedness, and when Zechariah, the son of his benefactor Jehoiada, the son of that man who had so faithfully assisted in the preservation of his life and his elevation to the throne of Judah,—when the son of that man raised his voice to warn the king and the people against the fearful consequences of the wrath of God, which they would most surely incur by a continuance of their wickedness; then Joash had this zealous servant of God murdered in the very court of the house of the Lord. The last words of the dying prophet were: “The Lord look upon it, and require it.” Thus Joash forgot all the wise instructions he had received in his youth, and, ungrateful towards God and men, he repaid benefits by crime and murder. A fearful warning to all that desire to walk in the ways of the Lord! It is not sufficient to profess belief and to live a virtuous life for a certain time, the Lord requires the whole heart, the worship of a whole life; and the relapsing, after a life of grace and godliness, into unbelief and sin, is worse than having lived in ignorance of God’s laws altogether. However, even relapses are forgiven by a merciful God, and



the Holy Scriptures are full of the admonitions of the Lord, directed to "His backsliding children," to return to his sweet yoke: "He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Those, however, that obstinately persevere in unbelief and wickedness, are doomed to perdition, and such was the fate of Joash. The Lord heard the words of dying Zechariah. He had, for a long time, been looking upon the wicked deeds of Joash, and as he continued in his perverse ways, He sent the Syrians into Judah as the instruments of his vengeance. These slew all the princes of Judah and carried away great spoil. Joash had to look upon the ruin of his kingdom without being able to do anything to avert it, for God's wrath went before the Syrians and delivered the people of Judah into their hands; and the king himself was lying prostrate on the bed of sickness, suffering from "great disease." And in this helpless position, when he most needed the aid of God and men, he was forsaken by both. He had left the ways of the Lord, therefore, the Lord left him in the time of his misfortune; and he had proved in so flagrant a manner his

ingratitude for benefits received by men, that no friend raised his hand for his protection, when the very servants of Joash conspired against their unfortunate king and slew him. This was an awful judgment, but a just one, for the Lord will not be mocked.

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### DANIEL.

ONE of the greatest prophets that God raised among His people before the birth of Christ, was Daniel. He was of princely birth, but in early childhood he had already to learn, that nobody, however high his station and rank in human society may be, is exempted from sufferings and misery. When very young, he was, together with many other children and grown up people, taken captive by the hosts of king Nebuchadnezzar, and carried away to Babylon. With grief in their hearts and tears in their eyes, the poor captives made their way to Babylon, lamenting over the loss of their country and the ruin and desecration of the temple of Jerusalem. "By the rivers of Babylon, there

we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."—(Psalm cxxxvii, 1, 2). But the pious ones among the captives tried to comfort one another, and determined, though living in a foreign land and among a nation of idolaters, always to remain faithful to the true living God and to worship Him alone. Daniel, young as he was, formed a firm resolution to the same purpose, and in every other way trusted in the merciful providence of God.

After the arrival of the captives at Babylon, king Nebuchadnezzar commanded that four boys, of princely birth, and endowed with personal beauty, should be chosen among the Jewish children, in order to be instructed in all the sciences and arts of the Babylonians, and thus to become useful servants of the king. Daniel was selected, together with three other noble children of the Jews, for this purpose; and a servant of the king was ordered to provide them with food, and everything necessary for their maintenance and instruction. This servant, Melzar, had strict orders given to him to provide these four children with meat and wine from

the king's table. But as the Jews were forbidden by the law of Moses to eat such meat, Daniel requested of the king's servant not to give him and his three friends of the meat from the king's table, but to provide them only with pulse to eat, and water to drink. Melzar was afraid that, by disobeying the king's command as to the food they had to take, they might lose their bodily comeliness, and thus get him into disgrace with his master. Daniel, however, prevailed upon him to try simple food for a short time, and God blessed the good sense and strong faith of the four Jewish children so much, that when they appeared before the king, together with other children brought up in the palace, they far excelled all others both by the beauty of their persons and their accomplishments in learning. They, consequently, were honoured by the king before all others, and thus reaped the reward of their faithfulness to God's commands. Thus early, Daniel proved a true faithful servant of God. Children ought to imitate his example, they ought to be determined upon serving God, and God alone; and to be firm, like Him in their adherence to true

religion, no matter whether kings or king's servants, high or low, should tempt them to break God's law.

The same resolution and firmness that Daniel exhibited as a child in the king's palace, he opposed afterwards, when grown up to manhood, to the temptations and snares of his enemies. The brilliant faculties of his mind, and the gracefulness of his behaviour founded upon true kindness and humanity, had made him, by the assistance of the God of his fathers, a favourite with several kings that succeeded each other in the rule over the mighty empire of Babylon. Among these kings there was one called Darius, who raised Daniel in rank and dignity over all the princes of the land. These princes, full of envy and spite against Daniel, conspired together for the purpose of causing his destruction. But as Daniel lived a holy life and was a faithful servant of the king, they could, for a long time, find no opportunity of damaging him in the good opinion of Darius. At last they resolved to make Daniel's known piety the cause of his downfall. With this wicked intention they went to the king, and asked him

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to enact a law, according to which any man that, for thirty days to come, should ask a petition of God or man, save of the king, should be cast into the den of lions. The king, who was himself a heathen and worshipper of idols, thought that the princes only wanted to do him honour, and therefore, readily gave his consent, but Daniel, who always served the true God, and used to pray to Him three times a day, knew that we must obey God, who commands us to pray to Him, more than men, and continued therefore in his usual devotions. He opened the windows in his chamber, towards Jerusalem, went down on his knees, and prayed and gave thanks to his God as he used to do, without heeding the new law. And Daniel did right to confess his God without fear of man, for Christ says : " Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven ; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."—(Matt. x. 32, 33). The enemies of Daniel who had been watching all his doings, soon informed the king that he had broken the law which forbade



him to pray to God or man except the king, and with great impetuosity they demanded that he should be cast into the den of lions. Daniel accordingly was brought and cast into it, but the king, who was extremely sorry for him and would have gladly saved him if it had been in his power, said: "Thy God whom thou servest continually will deliver thee." Darius spent the whole night following that day without sleep, and early in the morning he went to the den of lions, and exclaimed: "Oh, Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions?" To the great disappointment of his enemies, but to the exceedingly great joy of the king, it was found that Daniel was sitting unburnt among the lions, for God had shut the lions' mouths, so that they did not touch him. Then he was delivered from the den, and at the command of the king his enemies were thrown into it. But the evil spirit and the false gods whom they served, had no power to preserve their lives,—they were attacked by the lions, and their bones broken into pieces before ever they reached the bottom of the den. Thus God

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saved miraculously the life of his servant, and punished the wickedness of his enemies ; for He numbers the very hairs of our heads and protects us against all dangers, if we but preserve a steadfast faith in Him, and continue in watching and prayer.

Daniel enjoyed the grace of God to a very high degree. God granted him the power of interpreting dreams, and he had many prophetic visions of the future. But the longing for the arrival of the promised Messiah was uppermost in his mind, and God graciously revealed to him the time when the Saviour of the world was to appear on this earth, to fulfil the designs of Divine Mercy, and to bruise the head of the old serpent, the devil. The angel Gabriel told Daniel, that from the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem there should pass seventy-two weeks till the birth of the Saviour. By days are meant years, one week, therefore, is equal to seven years, and seventy-two weeks amount to five hundred and four years, which agrees very well with the records of profane history ; for when that period of time had passed away, from the restoration of the temple and city of Jeru-

saalem, Jesus Christ our Lord came into this world to save sinners. Thus Daniel was comforted by the certainty he felt that the righteous notwithstanding their sins and shortcomings, would be saved by the blood of Christ, and enter, at the end of time, into a life of everlasting glory. For "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—(Daniel xii. 2, 3.)

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### The THREE MEN in the FIERY FURNACE.

IN the history of Daniel we learned that beside him, three young boys of the Jewish nobility were chosen by king Nebuchadnezzar, to be brought up in his palace and to be instructed in the wisdom of the Babylonians. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and, like Daniel, they were deter-

mined to serve the living God and not to worship idols, although dangers should surround, and death itself threaten them. And the firmness and steadfastness of their faith was soon to be tried by a severe test.

King Nebuchadnezzar had an image of gold made, and gave out a command, that all men at the sound of the trumpet should fall down and worship that image. Whoever should refuse to do so, was to be cast the same hour into the midst of a "burning fiery furnace." But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, although they were threatened with a dreadful death in the flames of the fiery furnace, refused to give the same honour to a golden image which they knew was only due to the true God. They boldly stood up before Nebuchadnezzar and told him they would not worship his golden image, in spite of death itself staring them in the face, but that the Almighty, if He choose to do so, was still powerful enough to deliver them out of the hands of the king, and to save them from the burning flames.

Nebuchadnezzar, enraged at such firmness, had the furnace heated seven times hotter than

usual, and the three men thrown into it. So great was the heat of the furnace, that the very men who were employed in throwing the three faithful servants of God into the fire perished in the flames. Their work was a wicked one, and the stern judgment of the Lord overtook them, in the very performance of their cruel deed. But a different fate awaited the three men who preferred an atrocious death to sin and idolatry. When the wicked king, desirous to see the destruction of those men that dared to defy him in the name of their God, looked into the furnace, he saw the three men walking about in the midst of the flames, and a fourth, looking like the son of God, joining them in singing praises to the goodness of the Lord. For the Ruler of heaven and earth had graciously looked down upon His faithful servants and sent them one of His angels, who protected them from the fury of the flames, and thus frustrated the designs of wicked Nebuchadnezzar. The king, when he saw the wonderful way in which the only true God had preserved the lives of His servants, he cried out aloud: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye ser-

vants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." Then the three men came forth out of the flames, and all the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, witnessed that their bodies were entirely unhurt, not an hair of their heads was hurt, nor had even the smell of fire passed on them. Then, Nebuchadnezzar was convinced of the power of Almighty God, and he had a law proclaimed throughout his vast empire, that every person that should say anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should be punished with death, and his house and goods destroyed.

The three men whose steadfastness and firmness of faith we justly admire in this narrative of the Bible, would not have been able to defy tortures and death, if they had not, from their earliest childhood, piously striven to obey the commandments of God. When only children, they, together with Daniel, refused the delicacies of the king's table, delicacies which children are generally so fond of, and were contented to eat pulse and to drink water, because they knew that it was wrong, according to the law, to eat

of the meat which was served at the king's table. Let us, then, follow their example, let us, in our youth, strengthen our faith and practice self-denial, and we shall at the time of temptation, be as firm as the three men in the fiery furnace. For Satan and all the power of hell can never prevail against a true servant of God, who, firm in faith, confident in hope, and strong in charity, walks along the narrow path that leads to heaven and its eternal glory. Yea, to that glory where they will "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and Glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest."—(Rev. xv. 3, 4.)



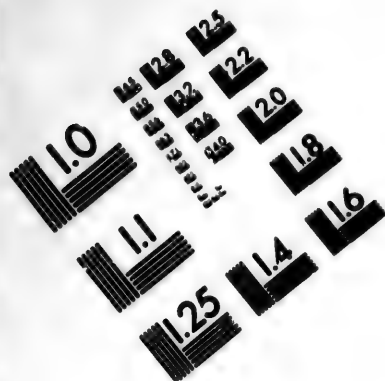
LET EVERY THING THAT HATH BREATH  
PRAISE THE LORD.



DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS.







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## OUR SAVIOUR.

**W**HEN God created heaven and earth there was "darkness upon the face of the deep;" but God said: "Let there be light, and there was light." About four thousand years after, a far more dismal darkness had spread over the face of the earth, the darkness of sin and death. All the nations of the world had forsaken the worship of the true God, and bowed their knees before vain idols: only the small nation of the Jews had preserved a remembrance of the Lord, and even the Jews, with few exceptions, were sunk into the depths of ignorance, sin, and misery. But God had promised to the sinful world a Redeemer, ever since the days of Adam, and the good among his chosen people were praying for the fulfilment of this promise day and night; as the prophet Isaiah had done long before that time: "Drop down ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together."—(Isa. xlv, 8).

At last, when the times were fulfilled, the

Lord from above again sent forth His word of command, and a new and glorious light broke upon the whole world, buried, as it was, in the darkness of misery and sin. For, according to the designs of Divine Mercy, the Son of God Himself descended from heaven, to live among poor, depraved mankind as one of themselves, and to die an ignominious death, in order to save all sinners, willing to believe in Him and His sacrifice. In Bethlehem of Judæa, Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world was born. The angels of heaven came down to proclaim the joyful tidings to the wondering people, and Satan and the powers of hell were confounded, because they knew that sin and death were overcome and that the kingdom of heaven was near. This was the event which patriarchs and prophets had longed for, and which, centuries before it happened, filled all pious souls with joy and ecstasy. "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."—(Isa. 44, 23).

Our Saviour came into the world, like the poorest of the poor; there were no splendid apartments prepared to receive him and shield him from the inclemency of the weather, there was not even room for him in the inn, and he was, therefore, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. He, the king of kings, and the Lord of the universe, preferred this poverty to the splendour with which angels, at His command, would have surrounded Him, in order to show, that misery and wretchedness should not prevent those who believed in Him, from gaining pardon for their sins and eternal happiness. But the child Jesus had not only to suffer from poverty,—danger and persecution arose against Him, and human help-mates of the evil Spirit sought His life in His tender infancy. The wicked king Herod, who reigned at that time over the land of the Jews, was afraid that Jesus would deprive him of his kingdom, and resolved to get rid of his apprehensions by killing the child. But as he did not know where to find the child, he gave the cruel order, to slay all young children in Bethlehem, that were under two years of age. Hundreds

of little children were, in consequence, savagely slaughtered, but the Saviour of mankind escaped the murderous designs of king Herod. His earthly parents were warned of the approaching danger by an angel of the Lord, and fled with the child to Egypt. However, after the death of the cruel tyrant, the parents returned with the child to Palestine, and settled at Nazareth in Galilee. Thus God's providence watched over the child, and thus the same providence is watching still over every one of us, rich and poor, high and low.

According to the Jewish law, the child Jesus was circumcised, and Mary, His mother, fulfilled everything that she was commanded to do by the same law. This was done to impress us with the necessity and wholesomeness of obeying human laws, given under the sanction of God. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—(Philip. iv. 8).



After having done every thing that the law required, the parents returned with the child to Nazareth, (for sacrifices could only be performed at Jerusalem). There, in the care of His foster-father Joseph and his mother Mary, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke ii. 40). The child Jesus grew up like any other human child, but being the Son of God at the same time, He, of course, did not partake of the sinfulness and corruption of heart, that had fallen to the lot of man, by the sin of Adam and Eve in the paradise. Consequently "He was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him." But by shedding His blood on the mount of Calvary, for the purpose of reconciling fallen mankind with His heavenly Father, He has enabled every one of us to gain the grace of God. If we only believe in Him, and by humble prayer beseech Him, to pour down upon us the treasures of His mercy and grace,—then we may be sure that our souls will be saved, for God is faithful in His promises, and will not withdraw His grace from sinners that come to Him through His son Jesus Christ.

Children, however young, however ignorant and weak they may be, are, above all, acceptable in the sight of Jesus, for He Himself said : "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of them is the kingdom of heaven." Children, at least, if they do not fully understand the importance of the sacrifice of Christ, may pray for His grace, may ask Him to pardon their sins, and to grant them a heart full of faith and love. Besides who is it that could boast of fully understanding the sacrifice of the cross ? It is not knowledge that Jesus wants, but faith, therefore he says : "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—(Matt. xviii. 3).

When Jesus was twelve years of age, His parents took Him with them to Jerusalem. A boy of twelve years of age became liable to the law and was expected to obey henceforth all its ordinances, such was the custom among the Jews. At the time when Jesus with Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem, the city was generally crowded with people, gathered together from all parts of the world. And when

the time of departure arrived, and Joseph and Mary intended to return to their quiet abode at Nazareth, Jesus was missed. His parents naturally thought, that the great concourse of people was the cause of having lost their precious charge, and their grief was indescribable. But as they supposed that He might have gone before them with relations or acquaintances, they went on one day's journey, inquiring in sorrow and anxiety for their inestimable charge. None of them, however, could give any satisfactory replies to their inquiries, and they, consequently, returned to the city, to continue their search there. After three days of investigation, they found Him at last in the temple, among the doctors, both hearing them and asking questions. To his mother's inquiry why he had stayed behind, He answered: "Wist ye not, that I must be about my Father's business?" He, then accompanied them to Nazareth and again lived in their house, "subject to them." "And he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

The sacred writings, besides this, mention no

more of Jesus' childhood and youth. But what they tell us, is quite sufficient to serve as an example to all children. The king of heaven and earth was subject to His earthly parents,—should not human children, then, try to be like Him, and obey their parents and those that God has set over them? Yes, obedience is a virtue which the word of God recommends to all people, both young and old. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”—(1 Sam. xv. 22).

Jesus also increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Children can do much towards imitating the child Jesus in these points. They can give their minds to what they are taught, and they are able to attend to lessons in godliness, to the reading of the holy Scriptures, to private and public worship, to prayer and meditation over the salvation of their souls,—they may attend to all this with a cheerfulness and willingness, that surely will please their earthly friends and bring down upon them the blessing of God. By thus following in the footsteps of their Saviour, they will secure to themselves peace of mind and

conscience on this earth, and after this life, they will join the happy choir of heavenly spirits, that surround the throne of the Almighty, and unceasingly sing: "Hallelujah to the Lamb."

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### CONCLUSION.

**I**N the foregoing narratives we survey, with our mental eyes, both scenes of happiness and scenes of misery, and we easily discover the difference of human fortunes, viz., virtue and piety on the one side, and crime and vice on the other. Man is endowed with a free will, and can, therefore, choose which path to follow, either that which leads to happiness and is laid out by God Himself, and on which the wanderer is assisted by grace from above; or the path to destruction, which Satan induces us to follow, and which our own sinful nature represents to us as the most delightful one.

If we follow the Godly path of virtue we may be assured of victory in all our struggles, for however weak we may be in ourselves, God Himself with His Almighty power gives us the

necessary strength to overcome our enemies. These enemies, indeed, are powerful and strong, but as they fight in the cause of the Evil one, and in defiance of the living God, like Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, their strength and power avails them nothing, even against an apparently weak antagonist, as David was, the son of Jesse; because the weakness of such an antagonist, if he goes to battle in the name of the Lord of Hosts, is made strength by God Himself, and the pride of the giant is soon laid low. What we want, therefore, is resolute christian courage and confidence in the power of God. Whenever we perceive the approach of the enemy, let us not hesitate, but at once engage with him, and fell him with our blows to the ground. The weapons which we ought to use are those mentioned by Paul (Eph. vi. 14—18): "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all

prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." And, however young, all persons have to perform this duty, viz., to fight the good fight against the enemies of godliness from without and from within. Joseph, Samuel, and Daniel were only children when they first struggled against, and gained the victory over, temptation and vice.

On the other hand, those who walk in the ways of wickedness, are threatened with dreadful punishments. For a time they are allowed to go on in their ungodly doings, and now and then they gain a worldly advantage, because God awaits for them to return to His love and to escape His wrath, but if they do not repent, but continue in their defiance of Divine Justice, they surely will sooner or later fall into the hands of that Justice, and learn that the Lord our God is a jealous God, who has created man to serve Him alone, and to obey solely and exclusively His commands. And this punishment of the Almighty Judge falls on young and old alike, and consists in misery, sudden and violent death. or those fearful torments which

await the wicked in the life so soon to come.

But, how admirable, on the other hand, is the benevolent care of God's providence for His chosen ones. In the desert or in the fruitful plain, in the turmoil of a city or the placid quiet of the fields, threatened by the cruelty of enemies or by the treachery of false friends, in every position of life, the good may confidently look up to their God for help and protection. And this help is often granted in a most wonderful way, and at a time when the short-sighted human understanding least expects it. When all seems to be lost, when nothing but misery is to be seen, even at the very gates of death, the Almighty often interferes with His power, and causes the happiest results to proceed from circumstances seemingly the most unfortunate. But, above all, His blessed promise of eternal happiness after death, should outbalance all other considerations, and induce young and old to join in the work of godliness, and to form the firm resolution, and act faithfully up to it, viz., to serve the Lord in the simplicity of their heart, and to obey His commands all the days of their lives.



## THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

WE read in *Genesis*, that the world was made by God's creative hand ;

In *Exodus*, the Hebrews marched to gain the promised land.

*Leviticus* contains the Law—the holy, just, and good ;

*Numbers* records the tribes enrolled—all sons of Abraham's blood.

Moses, in *Deuteronomy*, records God's mighty deeds.

Brave *Joshua*, in Canaan's land, the host of Israel leads.

In *Judges*, their rebellion oft provokes the Lord to smite ;

But *Ruth* records the faith of one, well pleasing in His sight.

In *First* and *Second Samuel*, of Jesse's son we read ;

Ten tribes in *First* and *Second Kings* revolted from his seed.

The *First* and *Second Chronicles*, see Judah captive made ;

But *Ezra* leads a remnant back, by princely Cyrus' aid.

The city walls of Zion, *Nehemiah* builds again ;

Whilst *Esther* saved her people from plots of wicked men.

In *Job* we read how faith will live beneath affliction's rod ;

And David's *Psalms* are precious songs to every child of God.

The *Proverbs*, like a goodly string of choicest pearls appear ;

*Ecclesiastes* teaches man how vain are all things here.

The mystic *Song of Solomon* exalts sweet Sharon's Rose ;

Whilst Christ the Saviour and the King the "rapt *Isaiah*" shows.

The warning *Jeremiah*, apostate Israel scorns ;

His plaintive *Lamentations*, their awful downfall mourns.

*Ezekiel* tells in wondrous words, of dazzling mysteries ;

Whilst kings and empires yet to come. *Daniel* in vision sees.

Of judgment and of mercy, *Hosea* loves to tell ;

*Joel* describes the blessed days when God with man shall dwell.

Among Tekoa's herdsmen, *Amos* received his call ;  
 Whilst *Obadiah* prophesies of Edom's final fall.  
*Jonah* enshrines a wondrous type of Christ, our risen Lord,  
*Micah* pronounces Judah lost--lost, but again restored.  
*Nahum* declares on Nineveh just judgment shall be poured.  
 A view of Chaldea's coming doom, *Habakkuk's* visions give ;  
 Next *Zephaniah* warns the Jews to turn, repent and live  
*Haggai* wrote to those who saw the temple built again ;  
 And *Zechariah* prophesied of Christ's triumphant reign.  
*Malachi* was the last who touched the high prophetic chord ;  
 Its final notes sublimely show the coming of the Lord.

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THE Jews in ancient times were appointed to inherit,  
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The Apostle in *Corinthians*, instructs, exhorts, reproves;

*Galatians* shows that faith in Christ alone the Father loves.

*Ephesians* and *Philippians* tell what Christians ought to be;

*Colossians* bids us live to God, and for eternity.

In *Thessalonians* we are taught, the Lord will come from heaven;

In *Timothy* and *Titus*, a Bishop's rule is given.

*Philemon* marks a Christian's love, which only Christians know;

*Hebrews* reveals the Gospel, prefigured by the Law.

*James* teaches, without holiness faith is but vain and dead;

St. Peter points the narrow way in which the Saints are led.

*John*, in his three Epistles, on love delights to dwell;

St. Jude gives awful warning of judgment, wrath and hell.

The *Revelation* prophesies of that tremendous day,

When Christ, and Christ alone, shall be the trembling sinner's stay.



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